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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 000822

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY WARNS IRAQ AND US TO BRING BARZANI AND THE  
PKK TO HEEL

REF: ANKARA 812 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: PolCouns Janice G. Weiner for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: MFA separately called in both the Iraqi Ambassador and us to reiterate its concerns about recent combative rhetoric from KRG President Barzani, and to warn that Turkey reserves the right to take action against the PKK if the Iraqis will not. Turkish officials are concerned that Barzani is seeking confrontation with Turkey, and urgently requested that we intervene with Barzani to get him to back down. While it is unlikely that the April 10 meeting of Turkey's National Security Council will result in immediate action, Turkey could use the ongoing PKK problem as a pretext to lash out more concretely against Barzani. End summary.

12. (C) On MFA Undersecretary (D-equivalent) Apakan's instructions, GOT Acting Special Envoy for Iraq Ozcelik called us in late April 9 to inform us that Apakan had just met with the Iraqi Ambassador to Turkey, Sabah Omran, and had passed to Omran a diplomatic note outlining Turkey's long-standing request for the Iraqi government to take steps to counter the PKK's presence in Iraq. Ozcelik handed us a copy of the note (full text in para. 8), which concludes with a warning that if Iraq fails to deal with this problem, Turkey will exercise its rights under international law to do so.

13. (C) Ozcelik reported that Apakan further told Amb. Omran that the GOI must persuade KRG Barzani to cease rhetoric which the GOT finds increasingly provocative and, in fact, hostile. As reported reftel, Barzani infuriated Turks with his comments in an interview published April 7 in which he warned that if Turkey interferes with Kirkuk, the Iraqi Kurds will do so in Diyarbakir. He asserted that Barzani's rhetoric helps no community in Iraq (including the Kurds) and is deeply damaging to Turkey-Iraq relations. Ozcelik implied that this request to the Iraqis -- which he said is also directed to us -- if even more urgent than the PKK issue.

14. (C) Apakan reached the Ambassador (on travel in Istanbul) on April 9 and passed on a shorter version of this message. Ambassador responded that he had already alerted Washington to the issue, and that Amb. Khalilzad had discussed the matter with Barzani in direct terms in late March.

15. (C) Ozcelik said he was delivering this message to us as well because we are allies and Turkey still believes our success in Iraq is directly tied to its own interests. But he also warned that "things are getting out of control. Barzani is pursuing a fait accompli (control of Kirkuk, then independence) which will be disastrous for the region." Ozcelik emphasized that Barzani's rhetoric on Kirkuk is increasing in intensity even as GOT leaders and officials have calmed theirs, and underscored that Turkey has no hidden agenda on Kirkuk. Its concern is that a hasty referendum on Kirkuk will lead to deep divisions among the communities in the province, leading to significant ethnic violence.

16. (C) Though Ozcelik reported that "patience is running very thin," he did not believe the April 10 National Security Council meeting would result in a "precipitous" decision (i.e., to carry out a cross-border operation). MFA in particular would counsel against this. But, he also implied, the stakes go beyond the PKK issue and into the entire relationship between Turkey and the KRG. He feared that Barzani is seeking a confrontation with Turkey, which the GOT would prefer to avoid. He asked again that we send a firm message to Barzani to stop raising the temperature with Ankara. As the Ambassador had with Apakan, we noted that Amb. Khalilzad had recently done this with Barzani. Ozcelik responded with concern that perhaps Barzani is not heeding American advice. If this is the case, he asked rhetorically, what can be done?

17. (C) Comment: This episode is reminiscent of July 2006, when then-Undersecretary Tuygan serially (and very publicly)

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called in both the Iraqi and U.S. Ambassadors to deliver a formal and stern warning about rising PKK violence and Turkey's willingness to act if Iraq (and/or the U.S.) did not. Yet the real issue here is not the PKK. It is instead Turkey's concern that Barzani is seeking confrontation with Turkey as it enters a delicate political season (the presidential selection process kicks off here April 16, and parliamentary elections must be held by November). Our concern is that Turkey may use the recent PKK-related violence as a reason to lash out in some way against northern Iraq.

18. (C) Text of Turkish diplomatic note (informal embassy translation):

BEGIN TEXT

Complimentary opening.

The Republic of Turkey continually regards Iraq as a friend and deems important Iraq's unity, territorial integrity, and peace.

In all contacts and meetings at every level with Iraq, we have expressed our uneasiness about tolerance of the presence of the PKK terrorist organization in Iraq, and have asked the Iraqi government to take resolute, urgent, and permanent measures in regard to this matter.

In a letter from the Prime Minister of Turkey to the Prime Minister of Iraq dated September 14, 2006, necessary measures were outlined and the desire expressed that they be taken in the shortest possible time. These measures include: an official declaration by the Iraqi government that the PKK is a terrorist organization in accordance with Iraqi law and regulation, the closure of so-called political parties related to the organization, the prevention of all armed and political activities of the PKK and related organizations in Iraq, and the interruption of terrorist infiltration across the Turkey-Iraq border into Turkey.

With regard to the issue of interrupting PKK activities, thus

far there has not been satisfactory progress. Resolute steps directed toward the core of the problem have not been taken. Indeed, the PKK has been allowed, once again, to hold its so-called general congress in northern Iraq with the participation of leaders of the terrorist organization. The PKK is continuing its terrorist activities against Turkey through use of its camps in Zap, Sinat-Haftanin, Hakurk-Kunera, Metina, Avasin-Basyan, Gara-Beyazdag, and Kandil in northern Iraq. The PKK is permitted to train in the terrorist camps in Iraqi territory. The PKK is using landmines, C-4, A-4, plastic, and all kinds of explosives in terrorist actions and obtains weapons provided to the Iraqi Security Forces. In addition, provision in Iraq of weapons, equipment, clothing, food, medical supplies, and other aid to the terrorist organization continues, terrorist leaders sought by Interpol are allowed to broadcast propaganda on television stations, and the issuance of Iraqi identity cards to terrorists in northern Iraq is continuing.

The security problems in Iraq are well known. However, a strong statement of the will of the Iraqi government and all the Iraqi institutions to display their firm intentions to deal with the problem has not been made, and even measures which could have been implemented immediately have not been taken. Not a single measure has been taken against the presence of the PKK on the Iraqi side of the border.

On the other hand, the signing of an Agreement Against Terror between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Iraq, a draft of which was handed over on May 30, 2006 to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki, has thus far remained unacknowledged by the Iraqi side.

In light of the above-mentioned issues, the Republic of Turkey wishes to highlight, within the framework of

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international law and sovereignty rights, the following:

--United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1368, 1373, 1566 and 1624 describe the duties and responsibilities of member states to combat terrorism. Within that framework, sections of those resolutions describe the measures member states must take to punish terrorists and cut off those who finance terrorist organizations as well as their logistical support,

--United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546, article 17, details the responsibilities of Iraq to prevent terrorists from infiltrating into neighboring countries from its own territories, and a letter appended to that same resolution includes a section that describes cooperation that Iraq must undertake in the sphere of combating terrorism and preventing terrorism,

--The final communique accepted at meetings of Foreign Ministers of Neighbors of Iraq,

--The Security Cooperation Protocol signed on September 18, 2006 by Interior Ministers of Neighboring Countries of Iraq,

--The second section of the seventh article of the Iraqi Constitution,

--The Agreement of June 5, 1926 on the Turkish-Iraqi Border and Good Neighborly Relations,

--The Agreement of March 29, 1946 between Turkey and Iraq on Good Neighborly Relations and Friendship.

In reference to the above, the Government of Iraq must eliminate the presence of the PKK in Iraq, capture and turn over to Turkey the ringleaders of the PKK terrorist organization who are in Iraq, and take urgent and decisive measures to prevent the terrorist organization from infiltrating across the Iraqi-Turkish border and from using

Iraqi territory to threaten Turkey.

If the Iraqi Republic does not take the measures set forth above, the Turkish Republic will take all measures necessary that flow from its rights with the framework of international law.

Complimentary close.

END TEXT

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WILSON